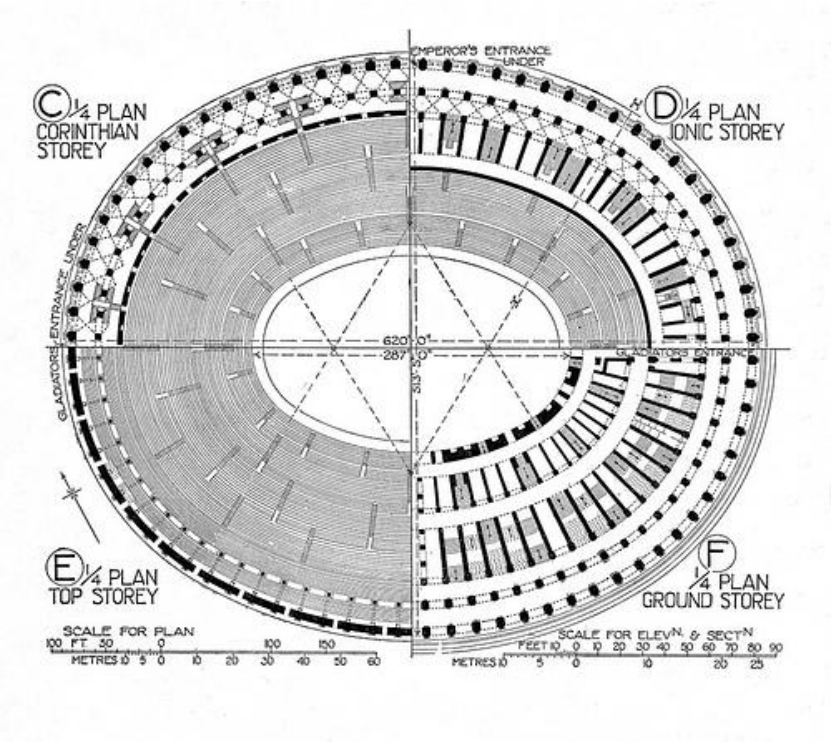
ROMAN COLLOSSEUM

roughly elliptical in shape, with its long axis,

oriented WSW-ENE, which measures 188 metres and the short one 156.

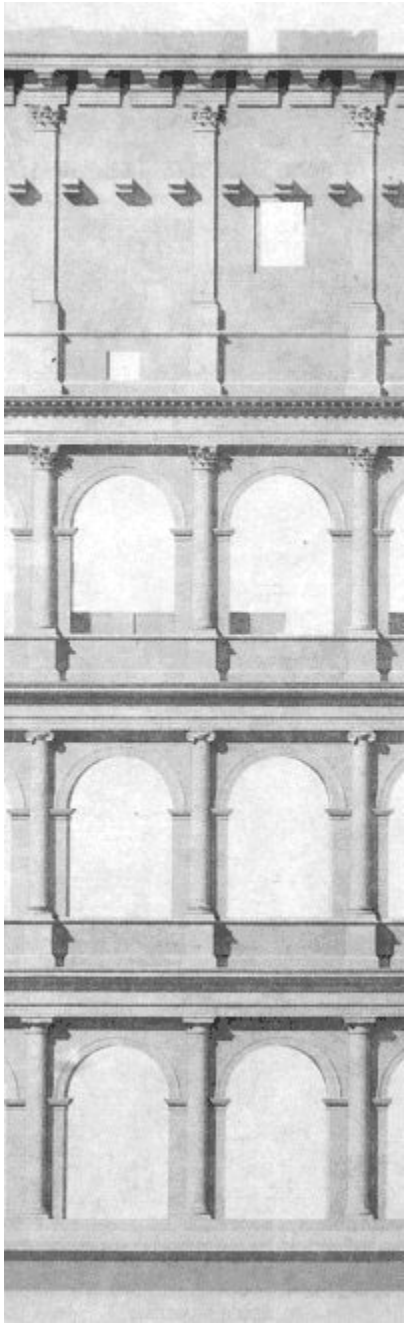
The building stands on a base of two steps; above it there are three floors of arcades and a fourth storey without arches but with small rectangular windows.

There were eighty arches on every floor, divided by pillars with a half column .


EMPEROR'S ENTRANCE UNDER
C 1/4 PLAN CORINTHIAN STOREY
D 1/4 PLAN IONIC STOREY
GLADIATORS' ENTRANCE UNDER
620' 0"
287' 0"
313' 0"
GLADIATORS' ENTRANCE
E 1/4 PLAN TOP STOREY
F 1/4 PLAN GROUND STOREY
SCALE FOR PLAN
100 FT 50 0 100 150
METRES 0 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60
SCALE FOR ELEVN. & SECTN
FEET 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90
METRES 0 5 0 10 20 25

The four arches on the axes of the building were the main entrances, and were probably decorated with a little porch and a statue. The other 76 arches were numbered for an easier access to the seats. All around the rims of the first three floors there were circular promenades that could accommodate most of the public in case of rain.

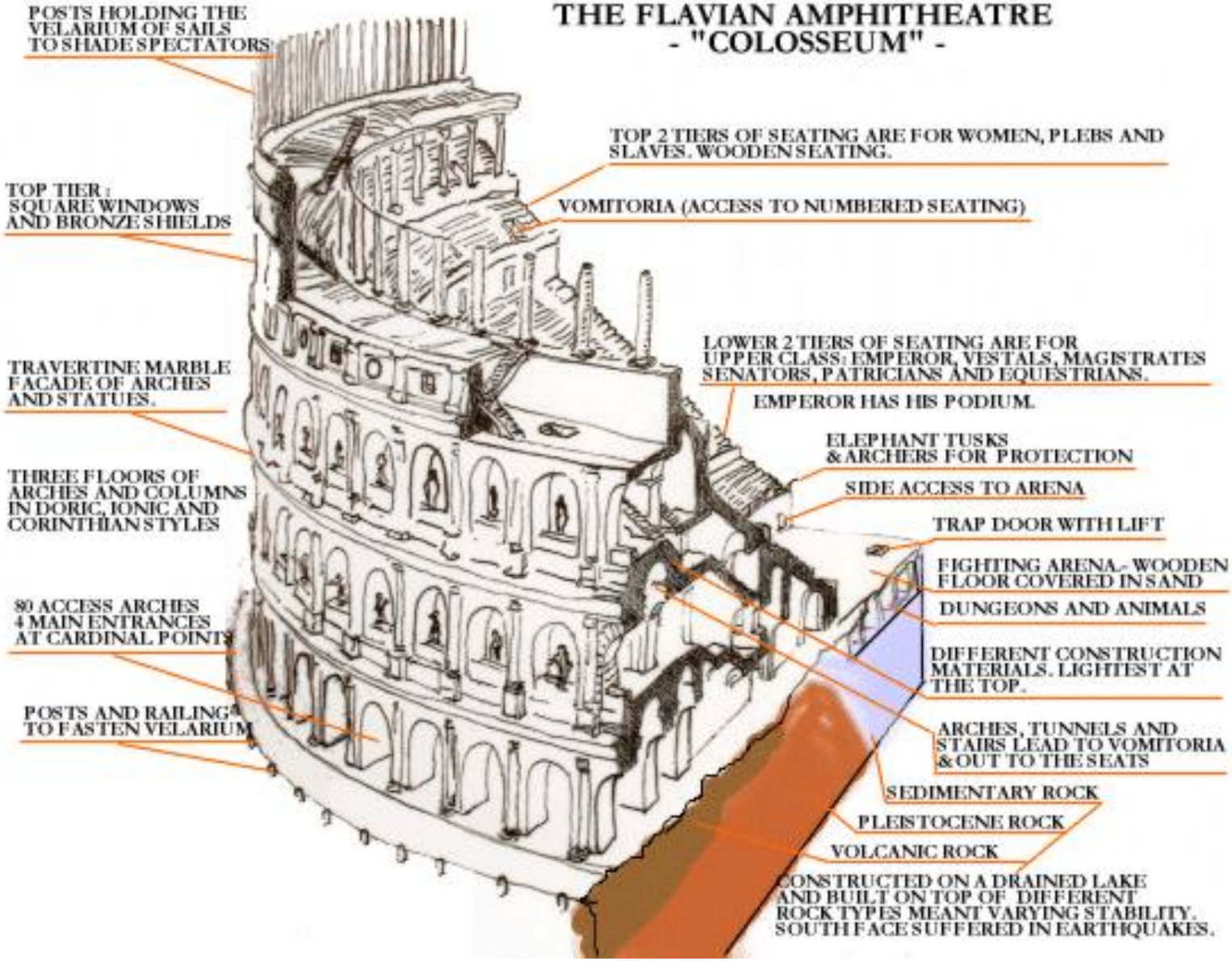
The Colosseum includes all the ancient architectural "orders", which are styles recognizable mainly by the columns employed. The order of the ground floor half columns is the Tuscan one (a Roman variation of the Doric order), on the second floor the semicolumns are Ionic and on the third floor Corinthian. The panels of the fourth floor - the attic - are divided by flat composite (Roman-Corinthian) lesenes in place of the half-columns of the lower arcades, with a rectangular window every second panel.

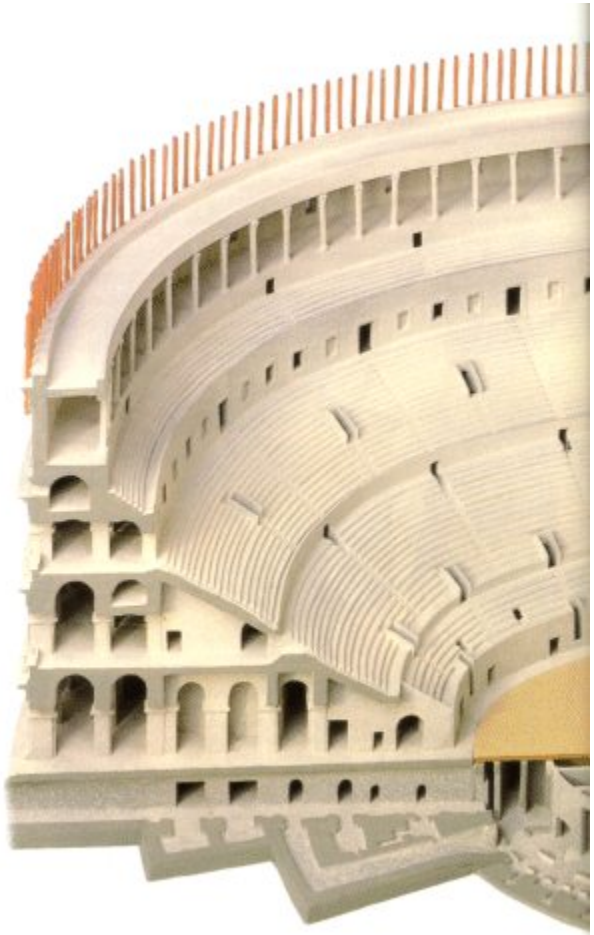


The arena where the shows took place measures 76 by 44 metres; its floor was made with wooden planks. All around the arena there was a wall called *podium*

Over 100.000 cubic metres of travertine stone (45.000 only for the external wall), quarried near Tibur (today Tivoli), were used.

The combination of different materials improves the elasticity of the whole: the main pillars are made of travertine, radial walls are of travertine and tuff, the vaults are cast in cement work, and the walls were plastered and painted white and red (most of the stuccoes have disappeared). The passages corresponding to the main entrances were decorated with paintings and stuccoes, which have barely survived the centuries. The travertine blocks were connected by iron grips that were removed a long time ago, leaving those ugly holes between the blocks. It has been calculated that 300 tons of metal were used only to this purpose.


THE FLAVIAN AMPHITHEATRE
- "COLOSSEUM" -
POSTS HOLDING THE VELARIUM OF SAILS TO SHADE SPECTATORS
TOP TIER : SQUARE WINDOWS AND BRONZE SHIELDS
TRAVERTINE MARBLE FACADE OF ARCHES AND STATUES.
THREE FLOORS OF ARCHES AND COLUMNS IN DORIC, IONIC AND CORINTHIAN STYLES
80 ACCESS ARCHES 4 MAIN ENTRANCES AT CARDINAL POINTS
POSTS AND RAILINGS TO FASTEN VELARIUM
TOP 2 TIERS OF SEATING ARE FOR WOMEN, PLEBS AND SLAVES. WOODEN SEATING.
VOMITORIA (ACCESS TO NUMBERED SEATING)
LOWER 2 TIERS OF SEATING ARE FOR UPPER CLASS: EMPEROR, VESTALS, MAGISTRATES SENATORS, PATRICIANS AND EQUESTRIANS.
EMPEROR HAS HIS PODIUM.
ELEPHANT TUSKS & ARCHERS FOR PROTECTION
SIDE ACCESS TO ARENA
TRAP DOOR WITH LIFT
FIGHTING ARENA - WOODEN FLOOR COVERED IN SAND
DUNGEONS AND ANIMALS
DIFFERENT CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS. LIGHTEST AT THE TOP.
ARCHES, TUNNELS AND STAIRS LEAD TO VOMITORIA & OUT TO THE SEATS
SEDIMENTARY ROCK
PLEISTOCENE ROCK
VOLCANIC ROCK
CONSTRUCTED ON A DRAINED LAKE AND BUILT ON TOP OF DIFFERENT ROCK TYPES MEANT VARYING STABILITY. SOUTH FACE SUFFERED IN EARTHQUAKES.



The corridors and stairs were planned in order to allow the public, calculated between 50.000 and 75.000, swift access and exit and to keep the different classes of spectators separated. The two main entrances on the short axis led directly to the central boxes, while a series of obligatory pathways, symmetrically repeated in each quadrant of the stand, led the other spectators to their assigned places

The *cavea* seats were made in travertine, but now the seats are almost completely lost. The cavea was divided into three parts called, from bottom to top, *podium*, *gradatio* and *porticus*.
In major amphitheatres, like the Colosseum, the *gradatio* was divided horizontally into different levels (*maeniana*) by *praecinctiones* (corridors), and vertically into *cunei* (sectors) by the *scalaria*, the steps leading to the *vomitoria*, the entrances. Upon entering, the spectators had to present a tessera, a tablet that reported the *cuneus*, *gradus* and *locus* of their For example, CVN III GRAD IV LOC I corresponds to seat 1, row 4, sector 3.